

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 21 JUNE 2017

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES DURING TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

Summary

1. The Council's Lead Officers and Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Children and Families, and Adult Social Care, have been invited to the meeting to provide an overview of the service and support provided to children with disabilities during their transition to adulthood.
2. This discussion will be held jointly with the Council's Adult Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel members, since the support services provided are relevant to both children and adults. All members of the Adult Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel have been invited to the meeting.

Transitional Support for Children with Disabilities

3. The Young Adults Team was established in 2012 to support transition to maximise outcomes for vulnerable young people and minimise the stress of change for service users and their families.
4. The Young Adults Team is a social work team with integrated housing and carer support workers. The Team is structured within Adult Services Directorate and works closely with other adult services, however also has formalised arrangements to ensure effective working with Children's Services.
5. The social workers have caseloads that require the application of both children's and adults social work legislation and requirements. The Team has both children's and adult safeguarding lead. The Young Adults Team Structure is attached at Appendix 1.
6. The Team supports young people aged 16 to 25 with a learning disability, physical disability or complex health and social care needs. The very large majority of these young people transfer from the services of the Children with Disabilities social work team.
7. A very small minority of young people will in the care of the Local Authority. There are currently 10 young people supported by the Young Adults Team who are Looked After. Care Leavers provision is also provided through the Young Adults Team. In addition a very few young people are subject to Child Protection plans.

8. The social work team act as the lead professional across all the levels of need, liaising and working with both children's and adult social work safeguarding services in line Worcestershire's Local Safeguarding Boards policies and procedures.
9. The Team works with up to 300 young people at any one time. Most (approximately 80%) of these young people have learning disabilities and attend special schools or colleges. A small minority (approximately 20%) have a physical disability alone and attend mainstream schools and colleges. Almost all of the young people supported by the Young Adult Team have an Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
10. Of those with learning disabilities, nearly half of them will have autism related behaviour and a very small minority (approximately 10) have behaviour that requires additional resourcing and skilled intervention.
11. The Young Adults Team is currently working with 16 young people who attend out-of-county residential school or college placements. The focus of this work is to achieve outcomes that are sustainable for the young person on their return to Worcestershire.
12. Social workers take case responsibility when the young person turns 16 years or at an appropriate transition point before this date. The point of transition to adult social care services from the Young Adults team is flexible and dependent on a stable and effective plan being in place for education/employment, care and health.
13. Outcomes for young people supported by the Young Adults Team are monitored taking into account outcomes relating to care arrangements, housing, education and employment, health and housing.
14. At the end of 2016/17 on reaching adulthood the very large majority of service users (168/196) were in education, employment, work experience or placements. The proportion of this cohort not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 14% (28). This remains a higher figure in comparison with 12.5% in the West Midlands and 11.5% nationally of all young people that are NEET. However this is a reduction on the two previous years and so an improving experience for young people.
15. Of this same cohort at the end of 2016/17 the very large majority of service users 90% (177/196) are living in settled accommodation. This has been an improving picture over the last two years and is higher than the national target rate, set at 77.5%.
16. During the previous term of Council in 2013/2014, care for children with disabilities during their transition to adulthood was discussed by both Scrutiny Panels and the Panel members were briefed about the new cross-directorate team arrangements.

Since this time the experience for young adults with disabilities has been influenced by significant changes in legislation, namely Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014.

17. Both pieces of legislation place a significant focus on the best possible outcomes based on high expectations and linked to long term aspirations. This has led to the development of Preparing for Adulthood Outcomes as a way for young people, parent carers, education, health and care providers to focus on the young person, their needs and aspirations and independence. Links between the Children and Families Act 2014 and Care Act 2014. The Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) factsheet is attached at Appendix 2.

18. The Adult Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel also looked at support for adults with learning disabilities, including the shift to new approaches for day services to reflect their wishes to be more independent, be part of their communities and for some, to access employment opportunities. Arising from these discussions, scrutiny panel members wanted to understand the support for children as they become adults.

19. Panel members will also be aware that the Council's Children's Services were graded 'inadequate' by Ofsted following its inspection in November 2016 (Appendix 3). The Inspection findings have been well publicised, along with the Council's actions and plans to address necessary improvements. During the inspection positive feedback was given regarding the work of the Young Adults Team; however the report referred to the need for this Team, the Children with Disabilities Team and the Care Leavers Service to have stronger links. Actions have been implemented to improve these links.

Purpose of the Meeting

20. Following the discussion of services and support provided to care leavers during their transition to adulthood, members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and the Adult Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel, are asked to:

- Consider the information provided
- Determine whether any further scrutiny or information is required at this time
- Agree any comments to be highlighted to the Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Children, Families and Communities, and for Adult Social Care

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 Young Adults Team Structure

Appendix 2 Links between the Children and Families Act 2014 and Care Act 2014. Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) factsheet

Appendix 3 Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (January 2017) - [available here](#)

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Directors of Adult Services and of Children, Families and Communities) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and Minutes of:

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 May 2014

Adult Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 16 March 2017, 23 May 2016, 12 November 2013

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